PITTA

Bulletin of the Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh **No. 87 : July 1998**

PROGRAMME

FIELD OUTING: 12-07-1998, 7.30 a.m.: Kasu Brahmanand Reddy National Park (Chiran Palace): This will be a half day trip. We meet at the main gate near L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. Bring rainwear if necessary.

INDOOR MEETING: 20-07-1998, 6 p.m.: "Wildlife in Andhra Pradesh," a talk by Pranay Waghray. Vidyaranya High School, Opposite Secretariat, Saifabad, Hyderabad 500004.

NOTES & NEWS

FIELD TRIP TO **CHILKUR DEER PARK**: 21 JUNE 1998

Humayun Taher

After a night long drizzle on Saturday, the morning of 21 June 1998 promised to be a wonderful day, cloudy and cool. Members who turned up tentatively for the field trip, apprehensive of rain, were not disappointed.

As they gathered near the cottages in the park, members were greeted by a murder of House Crows, who were at work with a few Pariah Kites on a gastronomic orgy by the gate. While we watched their frenzied activities, we heard Grey Partridge and Peafowl calling from the bush. A Shikra and its 2 young flew around, calling loudly, much to the chagrin of the crows, who dive-bombed them.

Now we decided to make our way to the observation post on the top of a hillock nearby. From this vantage point we saw a few Spotted Deer *Axis axis*. A few hundred yards away, there were three male peafowl standing on a rocky outcrop, calling loudly. They were in full breeding plumage, i.e., train and crest, and at least one was actively displaying. We also saw and heard Rufousbellied Babbler and Crow Pheasant from the observation point.

It was decided to follow what is called the 'ring road', i.e., a dirt track that circles the park. So we set off. The vegetation was full of sounds. Trills, cheeps and squeaks, the sources of which seemed strangely retiring! However, we persevered and were rewarded by sightings of both Purple and Purplerumped Sunbirds, Jungle and Franklin's Wren-Warblers, Koel, Yelloweyed, Large Grey and Whiteheaded Babblers and Small Minivets. A pair of Pied Crested Cuckoos flew overhead and we heard the Common Hawk Cuckoo. We did see a few 'little brown jobs' (lbj), but these did not deign us the honour of their identity. At one point Tom Hash pointed out an Indian Chameleon *Chamaeleon zeylanicus*, which immediately became a subject of immortality in the shape of photographs. Delighted at having at last found a subject that was incapable of disappearing before he had a chance of setting up his camera, Tom took his time in fitting on lenses and checking all his esoteric devices. Meanwhile, the chameleon, with a long-suffering air, making the best of a bad job, just sat there and regarded us in horror. Having photographed it, we pushed on.

One of us saw a small unidentified ground bird scuttling about in the bushes and decided that this warranted further investigation. Proceeding a few yards into the bush, a strange buzzing sound, coming from a thoroughly agitated beehive convinced him that discretion was the better part of valor! Small birds on the ground were not that important after all! A little distance away we found signs of Indian Porcupine *Hystrix indica* in the shape of pug marks and a few dropped quills—the cause of man-eating in Tigers *Panthera tigris*, if we are to believe Jim Corbett and Kenneth Anderson. We also found evidence of Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* as shown by holes dug in the ground in their search for tubers, *etc*., and hoof marks.

The list of birds seen on this trip, although not a large one, was decent and the weather, wonderful. The members, particularly the younger set, enjoyed themselves hugely and were fascinated by the little Scarlet Velvet Mites that littered the path thickly, following the rain of the previous night. All in all we had a good time and saw some 27 species of birds and three species of mammals. Sambhar *Cervus unicolor*, spotted deer and Blacknaped Hare *Lepus nigricollis*.

On May 10th this year, while visiting **Harike** in India's western **Punjab**, Per Undeland and Harkirat Singh Sangha discovered a **Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*** on some wet fields at the eastern edge of the wetlands. With the migration well under way there were many waders using this important Indian Ramsar site as a stopover on their way north. Per reports that there were good numbers of Temminck's and Little Stints as well as Curlew Sandpipers in the same area but the Pectoral Sandpiper was associating mostly with Wood Sandpipers. He and Harkirat were able to observe the bird for an hour on the 10th and again on the following day. He intends to write up the observation for publication, as this appears to be the first record for the Indian Subcontinent.

The occurrence of Pectoral Sandpiper in South Asia is not entirely unexpected as it is a long-distance migrant from its breeding grounds in the Arctic tundra to its main wintering area in South America. Some also regularly winter in Australia and New Zealand. Such long-distance migrants are, of course, well-known for their vagrancy and a number of birds are recorded each year in Europe. However, there appear to be relatively few Asian records away from its breeding area: almost annual on passage in April in Hong Kong; four spring passage records from China (Paul Holt pers. comm.); scarce annually on autumn passage in Japan; in the Middle East only a handful of records from Israel; to the best of my knowledge not recorded at all in SE Asia.

[Krys Kazmierczak <krys@compuserve.com> on NatHist S Asia Group <nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu>]

On May 28 there was some great news from George Archibald of the International Crane Foundation and Dr. Sasha Sorokin, the Coordinator of the Conservation Program for Siberian Cranes in Russia. The lone pair of **Siberian Cranes** that winters in **Keoladeo National Park** has safely returned to their nesting grounds near the Kunovat River in western Russia.

.....continued on page 4.

LETTER FROM AN INSECT-HUNTING ORNITHOLOGIST□□17

"A taxonomist says he describes a species, but I am aware, and I believe that the average describer is also aware, that what he is describing is a species-concept to the best of his ability with the material he has available. It is impossible to describe a species unless the totality of the species, all individuals of it, are available.

"Any taxonomist who believes in evolution must reject the idea of cataclysmic change, either in evolution of species or in human cultural development.

"Although the still undescribed species in many cases will be those that are naturally rare or found in remote or very specialized habitats, many, especially those segregated from old species, may be found by making better use of the material already in museums. Often, additional material pertaining to a species described from unique or very few specimens could easily have been secured by a request that curators and specialists look for it among their material of the old species or very similar species." [George C. Steyskal, 1967, *Syst. Zool.*, 16: 266-267]

Three months ago, *Pitta* had a concise summary, of a *Business Standard* news item, by Siraj Taher (*Pitta* # 84, April 1998) informing us of Rajat Bhargava's re-discovery of Rothschild's Parakeet (561 – *Psittacula intermedia* Rothschild) around Dehra Dun and Naini Tal. If the species was identified correctly, this is the first ever sighting, and recognition, of this enigmatic species, *in the wild*. It has been fairly conclusively proven to be a good species and not a hybrid of any combination of the following four closely related species (# 557-563): *Psittacula himalayana* Lesson (Slaty-headed Parakeet), *P. finschii* Hume (Hume's Parakeet), *P. cyanocephala* Linnaeus (Blossom-headed Parakeet), and *P. roseata* Biswas (Biswas' Parakeet). Lord Walter Rothschild built up one of the largest ever private collections of natural history specimens, sampled all around the globe through European and native collectors, some of whom he employed and even trained. His extremely valuable research collection was acquired by the American Museum of Natural History, New York, which, as a result, turned the second largest store-house of Oriental zoological material, after the Natural History Museum in London. His daughter, Miriam, became an entomological specialist on Fleas (Siphonaptera) and who, in collaboration with Theresa Clay, wrote the classic work FLEAS, FLUKES AND CUCKOOS (1952, Collins, London, 304 pp.). Inskipp, Lindsey & Duckworth (1996: 54) cite most of the pertinent references [except of Walter Rothschild, 1907, *Bull. Br. Ornithol. Club*, 19(131): 49-50], which in turn give the others dealing with *P. intermedia*. J.M. Forshaw (1973 & 1977, *Parrots of the World*, Melbourne) printed the only coloured illustration of this species. Like Biswas had opined (1959, *J.B.N.H.S.*, 56: 562), Rothschild's Parakeet perhaps "co-exists with either or both" Slaty-headed and Hume's Parakeets "in the altitudinal zone of approximately 1800-2400 metres" on the Himalayas. Its type-locality is unknown, but presumed to be Sikkim, as most of Rothschild's collectors worked there. But this may not be correct and *P. intermedia* may be existing as a small population only in the Garhwal—Kumaon—western Nepal zone of the Himalayas. However, as Biswas had also further commented that – "great portions of the Himalayas, particularly the Assam Himalayas, remain yet to be faunistically explored", it may also occur east of Nepal at altitudes similar to, or a little lower than, those frequented by *P. himalayana*. Finally, as indicated by my senior Dipterist (student of true flies) colleague George Steyskal (then at the U.S. National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C.) who is quoted above, a more thorough search among specimens of the related species of *Psittacula* named earlier, and held in museums, could turn up more *P. intermedia* material?

One other threatened species, that is only known from the Garhwal—Kumaon area, is what is incorrectly called the Mountain (or Himalayan) Quail (280 – *Ophrysia superciliosa* J.E. Gray). Only 10 specimens of this bird are available in museums, collected from altitudes similar to what Rothchild's Parakeet perhaps inhabits. Calling this bird a "quail" has been a misleading deviation from ornithological fact. This species is placed in a monotypic genus whose closest relatives are the Blood Pheasant (*Ithaginis*) and Spurfowl (*Galloperdix*); perhaps the Bush Quails (*Perdicula*) or even the Hill Partridges (*Arborophila*)? Ripley (1952, *J.B.N.H.S.*, 50: 904-905, Pl. II) wrote that it was classified "as a small partridge" which "is primarily a runner, not a flyer". It was first placed in the genus *Rollulus* by J.E. Gray, which now has a single species *rouloul* Scopoli (Green Wood-Quail or Crested Partridge) assigned to it, that is distributed from Tenasserim to Sumatra and Borneo [see NEW FAUNA 5: 368; 1928]. What we need capable, experienced, taxonomists to do is to make phylogenetic (cladistic also) analyses of bird groups, using every kind of morphological, anatomical, physiological, biochemical, biogeographical, behavioural, *etc.*, data available. Only then will clear-cut evolutionary relationships become apparent to ornithologists and bird watchers. Until these kinds of data are presented, we can only do 'guess-work'! Brigadier Talwar (Retd) gave a good summary of data (*NLBW* 35: 32-33; 1995) on what I would call a **Mountain Pygmy Partridge**. Hume's conjecture that this is "possibly a migrant from the well-wooded south-eastern portions of Chinese Tibet", only during "severe winters" is hardly plausible, like Talwar also believes; this pygmy partridge being a poor flier and incapable of long distance aerial migrations. My 'instinct' does, however, prod me to consider the real possibility of this bird being a denizen of tall grassland niches in *swampy* tracts, perhaps in flood-plains beside mountain streams, which would encourage growth of the tall grass jungle it selectively inhabits. These are the micro-niches that are under threat on the Himalayas and may account for the fall in populations of such specialized birds. Flightlessness is known to be a feature of typically high mountain insects (beetles, especially). So, search for this pygmy partridge in higher, swampy habitats in the Garwhal—Kumaon—western Nepal Himalaya may be a better strategy, if made in collaboration with the native expertise of local bird trappers (see Rajat Bhargava, 1995, *NLBW* 35: 102-104). The other writings on this phasianid have been by E. Comber (1905, *J.B.N.H.S.* 16: 361-362), E.C. Stuart Baker (1921, *Bull. Br. Ornithol. Club*, 42: 35), and by Salim Ali [1977, *NLBW* 17(5): 1-2].

I will deal briefly with one other threatened bird species, Blewitt's Wood Owl (653 – *Athene blewitti* Hume) which was finally re-discovered by Ben King, Pamela Rasmussen and David Abbott (*Pitta* # 81, January 1998) on the Satpura Hills in Khandesh, between the Narmada and Tapti Rivers, where J. Davidson (*Stray Feathers*, 10: 292; 1882) had earlier shot them and despatched, what he thought were Spotted Owlets, to Hume who had described this remarkable Wood Owl in 1873 (*Stray Feathers* 1: 467-469) and also erected a new genus, *Heteroglaux*, for it. Rasmussen comments on its resemblance to the genus *Glaucidium*, which includes our Jungle Owlet, but I would not be surprised if *Heteroglaux* is actually the right generic placement for this "apparently highly diurnal" owl, which Davidson had found perched on tops of thin, exposed trees "late in the morning". The INDIAN HANDBOOK (3: 303; 1969) says it is "partial to the neighbourhood of streams", so its diurnal habit, perching on tops of exposed tree branches above streams or other water-bodies, could possibly be a strategy to 'hawk' insects, like dragonflies and aquatic beetles, emerging from the water or adjacent soil and flying above them in some numbers?

Except for Jerdon's Courser, Great Indian Bustard, Yellow-throated Bulbul and other threatened species, which are decidedly dry country inhabitants (I will write about these in a future Letter), isn't it interesting that the three forest birds dealt with above are all quite possibly

attached to *aquatic ecosystems* in still dense, undisturbed jungles? Rajat Bhargava may well look for Rothschild's Parakeet in jungle flanking Himalayan streams or even marshes, at the right altitudes and perhaps get lucky with a 'bird in the hand'?

[Rasmussen's recent article in *Hornbill* # 84, pp. 4-9 (March 1998), was received after the above Letter was written. Her suggestion that "reinstatement of the genus *Heteroglaux*....may be warranted" does feel good! Unfortunately, she indulges more in Meinertzhagen-bashing than in giving the interested reader more data on the actual habitat and behaviour of Blewitt's Wood Owl, which, as she writes, "were sent to Dr Asad Rahmani of the Bombay Natural History Society." The fairly satisfactory photographs printed show an owl which looks a relic of Gondwanaland, and whose closest living relation may still be ludicrously "tail-wagging" in the lowland water-side forests of north-east Africa? Field searches should now be carried out along the tributaries of the River Mahanadi in the Chhattisgarh—Kalahandi area, on the Madhya Pradesh—Orissa border, where F.R. Blewitt and V. Ball secured the other, earlier, existing specimens of Blewitt's Wood Owl. Even if Meinertzhagen's "Mandvi [on the River Tapti], October 1914", specimen is really one of J. Davidson's "in the heavy jungle below the Satpuras" series, poor old Colonel Richard's concocted data isn't really far from what now applies to the distribution and habitat of this re-discovered Wood Owl.

Aasheesh Pittie has kindly sent me a synoptic paper (photocopy) on Rothschild's Parakeet by Carol & Tim Inskipp (1955, *O.B.C. Bull.*, # 22, pp. 29-31, col. pl.) which cites all the references on this bird. The problem with the colour of its lower mandible is perhaps a question of scientific credibility. S.R. Sane and his colleagues are evidently wrong in so many of their statements and reasoning that I prefer to stick by Rothschild's original description, the "Under mandible orange-yellow". The Inskipps' claim that this parakeet was "reportedly trapped" near Benares (*Varanasi* in native tongue) and "Mattiyar" (where is this? Mirzapur?) suggests a riverine habitat, but I have my doubts if these plains-trapped birds were really *intermedia* or just variants of the Blossom-headed Parakeet, with black lower beaks/bills.

Heteroglaux blewitti's closest Indian relative is possibly *Glaucidium brodiei* Burton (635 – Collared Pygmy Owlet). Salim Ali & Dillon Ripley's description of the latter's habitat (see INDIAN HANDBOOK 3: 285-286; 1969) is eerily reminiscent of that made by the three United States' ornithologists on the recently re-discovered *blewitti*. The food of both these owls must also be similar — large insects, besides small birds, rodents and lizards. Stuart Baker's notes on *brodiei*, embellished with two 'antique' colour plates by the legendary H. Grönvold, suggests "Its principal diet is insects" (NEW FAUNA 4: 450-453, pls VI & VII; 1927). Abbott's notes (kind courtesy A.P.) are more illuminating, the "harrying antics" of the Indian Rollers most certainly a fight for their insect food territory, not protection of nestlings at that time of the year (November).]

– Dr. Kumar Ghorpadé

[**Errata** in Letter # 16 – Line 3 from bottom of quotation should read "from one thermal", Line 1 of text "last month", Line 3 of para 4 "now in an", and Line 8 of last para should read "(Loranthaceae)".]

BIRDING NOTES *Compiled by Aasheesh Pittie*

This column publishes birding notes in brief telegraphic form, from **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra & Tamil Nadu** on interesting and significant sightings and behaviour like breeding, feeding, migration, nesting, etc. Notes on flowering and fruiting trees and their relationship with birds are also welcome. English names and classification follow, S.D. Ripley's *A Synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan* (1982, 2nd ed.) and scientific nomenclature, T. Inskipp, N. Lindsey & W. Duckworth's *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of the Oriental Region* (1996). Unless specified, all observations are for 1998. Abbreviations, Contributors, Notes, Regional Referees, etc., are at the end. For selection of breeding criteria 'Probable, Possible, Confirmed', see *Pitta* # 82, February 1998, p. 4.

ANDHRA PRADESH

CHITTOOR DISTRICT

Rishi Valley (VS) 15-29.4

BONELLI'S EAGLE 16.4: 2; SHORT-TOED EAGLE lone birds; PEREGRINE (SHAHIN ?) FALCON 21.4: 1 in flt; SPOTTED DOVE PRB, courtship disp.; LITTLE BROWN DOVE PRB, courtship disp., & calls. 1 chasing Tree Pie.; KOEL POB, in song; HOUSE SWIFT PRB, N in cave rocks; LITTLE GREEN BEE-EATER CB, entering N with food; HOOPOE CB, with food in bill & calling throughout day; COPPERSMITH CB, feeding yng in N; INDIAN PITTA Seen/hrd till 29.4; BROWN SHRIKE single birds; GREY DRONGO 28.4: 1; JUNGLE CROW 19.4: CB, 1 incubating; REDVENTED BULBUL feeding on sandalwood berries; STREAKED FANTAIL WARBLER CB, with fecal matter & food in bill; TAILORBIRD PRB, territorial fights; TICKELL'S LEAF WARBLER (?) 19.4: 1; DULL GREEN LEAF WARBLER seen/hrd till 29.4; LARGE PIED WAGTAIL CB, with food in bill, also juv., seen; THICKBILLED FLOWERPECKER 1; TICKELL'S FLOWERPECKER feeding on Sandalwood *Santalum album* berries; PURPLERUMPED SUNBIRD PRB, entering N; LOTEN'S SUNBIRD 1 in eclipse plm; PURPLE SUNBIRD CB, with food in bill; INDIAN ROBIN CB, M with food in bill.

HYDERABAD DISTRICT

CIEFL Campus

BARN OWL 15.4 (JVDM); INDIAN PITTA 28.5 (SP).

Hyderabad city 4.6 (HJ)

SHIKRA 5.3: sunbathing on ground; HOUSE CROW PRB, 1 F mating with 2 M one after the other.[1]

Nehru Zoological Park 10.5 (YM)

PARIAH KITE POB, carrying N-mat.; BLACK DRONGO CB, 1 N with 1 chick.

Osmania University campus 5.1998 (MSK)

SHIKRA catching Indian Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus coromandra* in flt & feeding on it on perch.

MEDAK DISTRICT

ICRISAT Campus, Patancheru (SQ)

YELLOW BITTERN 27.5; LESSER ADJUTANT 29-30.5: 1 Icrisat Lake & roosting in Banyan tree *Ficus bengalensis*; LESSER WHISTLING TEAL 27.5: 300; REDHEADED MERLIN 28.5: Pair on Palm tree. 3.6: 1; PIED CRESTED CUCKOO 28.5; LESSER GOLDENBACKED WOODPECK-ER 7.6: 1; WHITEBROWED BULBUL 4.6: 1; BLACKHEADED MUNIA 29.5: *c.* 15. 3.6: *c.* 10.

RANGAREDDI DISTRICT

Ibrahimpatnam Tank 25.4 (HJ)

OPENBILL STORK 37; HOOPOE CB, ad., with yng.

Mamidipalli 29.4 (HJ)

BLACK IBIS; BONELLI'S EAGLE PRB, 2 with a juv., F; SCAVENGER VULTURE CB, N; JUNGLE BUSH QUAIL.

Shamirpet Lake 17.5 (AP)

REDWATTLED LAPWING CB, 1 N with 3 eggs. Ad., incubating; ASHYCROWNED FINCH-LARK CB, ad., F., feeding yng; SYKES' CRESTED LARK PRB, ad., with food in bill.

KARNATAKA

BANGALORE DISTRICT

Bangalore City

DARTER 20.5: 1 over Ulsoor Tank with cormorants (RA); COUCAL 1.4: PRB, N under const., was destroyed by Bonnet Macaques *Macaca radiata* on 26.4 (BVN); SMALL GREEN BARBET 22.5: CB, entering N (in Tulip

Tree *Spathodea campanulata*) with food (SK); INDIAN MYNA 22.5: POB, 2 N 1 carrying feather into N & other entering N hole (SK); REDWHISKERED BULBUL 28.5: CB, 1 N with 3 chicks, 4' up in bush (sp. ?) (AP, AmP); WHITE-EYE 17.5: CB, incubating 3 pale blue eggs in N suspended 4'6" up Silver Oak *Grewelia robusta* (PSM).; SPOTTED MUNIA 28.5: PRB, with N-mat., (AP, AmP).

Cubbon Park, Bangalore city 24.5 (AP, AmP)

SMALL GREEN BARBET CB, N., *c*., 20' up on underside of branch. Ad., bringing insect (sp. ?) to N; JUNGLE CROW PRB, 1 with N-mat..

Magadi Road (TNAP)

BARN OWL 24.11.1997: CB, N in Neem tree *Azadirachta indica* hollow. 4 eggs. 3 fledged during 1st week of Feb 1998. Ad., fed rats (sp. ?) & Grey Musk Shrew *Suncus murinus* to yng; COLLARED SCOPS OWL 12.1997: CB, N with 1 egg; SPOTTED OWLET 12.1997: Ad., carrying food to N.

BIJAPUR DISTRICT (RBN)

Ghataprabha River basin 21.4

LARGE EGRET 2 ad.; POND HERON *c*. 50 ad.; LITTLE EGRET *c*. 100+ ad.; WHITE IBIS 3 ad.; SPOTBILL DUCK 2 ad.

Mudhol Town

BLACK IBIS 7.5: CB, 2 ad., on N atop Mango *Mangifera indica*; YELLOW-WATTLED LAPWING 30.5: CB, 1 ad., with 1 yng; MOTTLED WOOD OWL 29,30.4: 3 ad., on neem tree; GREY HORNBILL 20.4: 3; BRAHMINY MYNA 30.4: POB, near hollow in tree.

MYSORE DISTRICT

Nagarahole National Park

GREAT BLACK WOODPECKER 5.1998: 1 (PSM).

Talvekere Tank 22.5 (AP, AmP, VB)

GREY PELICAN 7; DARTER 2; GREY HERON 1; PURPLE HERON 1; CATTLE EGRET POB, in br., plm; PAINTED STORK 6; WHITE IBIS 3; BLACK IBIS 13.

SHIMOGA DISTRICT (RBN)

Anandapuram Village, Sagar Taluk 21.5

POND HERON 20; LITTLE EGRET 50+ POB in br., plm; PURPLE MOORHEN 10.

KERALA

IDIKKI DISTRICT (RM)

Munnar 8-12.5

SHAHEED FLACON 2 (Rajamalai Sanctuary); EMERALD DOVE 2 (Letchmi tea gardens); INDIAN LORIKEET; SPECKLED PICULET; BLACKHEADED ORIOLE; ASHY SWALLOW-SHRIKE; HILL MYNA; SCARLET MINIVET; FAIRY BLUEBIRD CB, several carrying food in bill to N in wild Jack Fruit *Artocarpus* sp. trees; NILGIRI PIPIT; LITTLE SPIDERHUNTER 2 pairs.

Peermade, Muringupuzha Coffee & Cardamom Estates 21.2

SHIKRA; CRESTED GOSHAWK; RUFOUSBELLIED EAGLE; BLACK EAGLE; RED SPURFOWL; GREEN IMPERIAL PIGEON; NILGIRI WOOD PIGEON; INDIAN LORIKEET; MALABAR TROGON; SMALL GREEN BARBET; GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO; HILL MYNA; SCARLET MINIVET; FAIRY BLUEBIRD; BLACK AND ORANGE FLYCATCHER; NILGIRI FLYCATCHER; CHESTNUT-BELLIED NUTHATCH.

MAHARASHTRA

NASHIK DISTRICT (BR, SG)

Gangapur Dam

PAINTED PARTRIDGE 24.5: CB, 2 ad., & 2 yng seen; YELLOW-WATTLED LAPWING 18.5: CB, N with 3 downy yng. 20.5: CB, N with 4 eggs. 24.5: CB, N with 4 eggs; INDIAN COURSER 24.5: CB, pair with 1 yng; ASHYCROWNED FINCH-LARK 12.5: CB, 2 N with 2 eggs each, 1 N with 1 yng; RUFOUSTAILED FINCH-LARK 20.5: CB, 1 N with 4 eggs.

TAMIL NADU

COIMBATORE DISTRICT

Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary 5.1998 (RM)

CEYLON FROGMOUTH 1. Hiccup like call repeated every 2-3 seconds.

ABBREVIATIONS: Ab-abundant; ad-adult/s; br-breeding; C-common/ly; CB-confirmed breeding; const-construction/ing; *c*.-approximately; disp-display/ing; F-female; flt-flight; fly-family; freq-frequent/ly; hrd-heard; id-identify/ied; imm-immature; inc-include/ing; Is-Island; juv-juvenile; LM-local migrant; M-male; mat-material; N-nest/ing/s; POB-possible breeding; PRB-probable breeding; plm-plumage; RF-Reserve Forest; Tlk-Taluk; vil-village; WL-wildlife; yng-young.

CONTRIBUTORS: A Pittie (AP); A Poddar (AmP); B Raha (BR); BV Nitin (BVN); H Jaffer (HJ); JVD Moorty (JVDM); MS Kulkarni (MSK); PS Madhusudan (PSM); RB Naik (RBN): R Arvind (RA); R Mathew (RM); S Gudsoorkar (SG); S Karthikeyan (SK); S Padmanabhan (SP); S Quader (SQ); TNA Perumal (TNAP); V Bhagat (VB); V Santharam (VS); Y Malini (YM).

NOTES: [1] "there is good circumstantial evidence for more than occasional promiscuity in the mating". (COMPACT HANDBOOK 5: 246; 1987).

REGIONAL REFEREES: Andhra Pradesh: A Pittie; Karnataka: JN Prasad; Kerala: PO Nameer; Maharashtra: N Jamdar; Tamil Nadu: V Santharam.

.....continued from page 1

Sasha Sorokin has been monitoring these two birds, in India and in Russia, since the early 1980's. In the winter of 1995/96, he was able to confirm that this was indeed the Keoladeo-Kunovat pair after colour banding their chick on the nesting grounds in Russia and following the birds to India. This is now the only pair of Siberian cranes that are known to visit India. Last winter, they arrived in Keoladeo National Park on 17th November. They were accompanied by one other adult Siberian Crane. Three and a half months later, at 10.20 am on 4th March (ref. Ms Shruti Sharma, Director KNP), they took off for their long and hazardous journey to their nesting ground in western Russia. Three pairs of Eurasian Cranes are nesting near the pair of "Sibes" at Kunovat and Russian scientists plan to exchange their eggs with those from captive Siberian Cranes from the Oka Nature Reserve in June. [Belinda Wright <blue @giasdl01.vsnl.net.in> on <nathistory-india@lists.Princeton.EDU>]

For Private Circulation Only

For more information write to: Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh, PO Box 45, Banjara Hills PO, Hyderabad 500034. India.
Editors: Aasheesh Pittie (3350683) & Siraj A Taher (3352607).
Membership (Rs): Admission=20; Ordinary=100, Student=25 per annum; Life=1,000. **E-mail**: AASHEESH@HD1.VSNL.NET.IN